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Copy #3

OSS historical records (see esp. page 2)

24 May 1957
M. P. C. Twp

MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

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SUBJECT: Report on trip to CIA Records Center,
Thursday, 23 May 1957

1. Purpose of trip, which occupied entire working day, along with 2 additional hours driving [redacted] was to make a preliminary check to see first-hand what CIA historical records for the period 1953-56 have actually been retired to the Records Center. (See pars. 7-8, below.)

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2. This visit was my first to the Records Center's new location [redacted]

[redacted]. We have from time to time borrowed files from [redacted] centers, but this was the first occasion for me to see first-hand the transformation of the Records Center into a modern, well equipped, and well staffed archival depository, with apparently excellent security features and with excellent telephone and courier communications with CIA headquarters.

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6. A second historical matter, volunteered by [] as to describe to me a large collection of records, publications, and museum material of OSS days which General Donovan has in his possession in his office in New York City. From his description of these "fabulous" OSS archives, I suspect that they properly belong to the rest of the OSS archives in CIA custody (in R&S Building). Even aside from security considerations, it seems to me that these files comprise an archival collection that has been alienated from proper government archives ownership. Whether the OSS Archives Section in DD/P knows of them, and whether they already have "strings" on them, I do not know, but it seems to me that we should discuss this matter with the DD/P archivist, [] I so recommend. Recommendation: Discuss with OSS Archives Section.

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7. As to the research work itself, which was my reason for going [] I spent a net of 5 hours, making a detailed check of the holdings of the following seven offices in the Records Center, to see which of their records, for the period 1953-56 (only) are now deposited in the Records Center:

1. O/DDI
2. OBI
3. OCI
4. OIC
5. ONE
6. AD's office, OO
7. Sovmat Staff, OO

The results of the above searches (now in note form), will be typed up, in approved historical-bibliographical form, within the next day or so. The end result will be that we will have in the Historical Staff a complete bibliography of all the major files of historical interest for each of these offices, made up in each case of (a) the list above, and (b) the list of the records still in the office's current files. Taken together, and used together, these lists should save us many, many man-days of wasted effort in tracing the whereabouts of a given file which we need in our historical research and writing.

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8. There remains the comparable task of completing the listings for the following ~~25X1A~~ offices, for which there was not enough time yesterday. ()

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1. ~~00/C~~
2. ()
3. 00/FDD
4. ORR
5. OSI
6. OCR
7. DD/S offices (still to be selected)

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9. Incidental to my research at the Records Center, I spent ~~25X1A~~ in informal conversation with () chief) and Mr. () (his principal assistant), telling them something of our needs, in general, for historical records for the period 1953-56, and to urge them to be as conservative as possible in their destruction of records (for that period) before we have had a chance to use them. I am confident that we will have their cooperation in putting "stop orders" into effect on certain kinds of records which have already been earmarked for destruction but which we find to have sufficient value to be kept for a further period of time. For example, there are several dozen "chrono files," as well as a number of other specific files which I have uncovered in my searches, which (I feel strongly) should be re-appraised for further preservation. Recommendation: As soon as I can get to it, I propose to reduce to writing such a list of specific historically-useful files, with the recommendation that the Management Staff and the operating office concerned place a "stop order" ~~25X1A~~ against their destruction. Before submitting this list to () and Col. Grogan, I will discuss the problem informally with Records Management personnel.

10. Two minor problems were raised by () in the course of my visit. Neither of them bear on the 1953-56 history but are of concern to past projects of the Historical Staff:

11. Loaned records: When () asked, very diplomatically) can the Records Center expect the return of files (pre-1953 files) loaned to the Historical Staff over the last several years? He singled out, especially, the several file cabinets of ORE records (1946-50), which, he claimed, are technically in the ownership of the Records Center (not of the Historical Staff) and which are technically "charged out" to the Historical Staff by the Records Center.

Recommendation

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(I offered to raise this question with my superiors when I returned, and expressed our interest in cooperation to the fullest.) Recommendation: As soon as feasible, our "house cleaning" of pre-1953 files should be completed; see also my previous recommendation, that ORE files, 1946-50, be retired to [] where many other ORE records are already deposited.

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12. Background Historical Information. Can [] the Historical Staff suggest any methods or short-cuts to the Records Center's archivists, in getting (expeditiously) the necessary background historical information on the purely organizational history of CIA's many offices, divisions, branches, etc., 1946-date? The Records Center needs such "genealogical" information (and they need it badly, I feel, privately), in order that they can properly and more accurately organize the thousands of collections in their custody. I did not reveal the fact that much of this kind of information is already compiled, incidentally to our 1946-50 and 1950-53 histories. If the Records Center undertakes to compile such information independently, it would (I think) be a case of wasteful duplication of Agency effort. Without committing this office, I did offer to discuss the Records Center's needs with my superiors, when I returned, to see what, if anything, we could do to be helpful to them in what is, I believe, a common interest--the proper care of CIA's historical archives. Recommendations: I recommend, first (1), that the Records Center's key personnel be permitted to examine the Historical Staff's two major histories (1946-50, and 1950-53), and to make excerpts and notes of whatever organizational "genealogies," organizational charts, etc., that might be helpful to them in their continuing archival job of reconstructing and making understandable the masses of pre-1953 historical records which they have in custody at []. Second (2), I recommend that the Records Center personnel be permitted to consult with the Historical Staff informally, from time to time, on specific historical or archival questions which they encounter, bearing on the historical records in [] provided that our continuing research and writing programs are not unduly interrupted, and provided that Colonel Orogan be kept fully and promptly informed whenever the Records Center seeks our consultation.

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27 May 1957

APPROVED except so much of paragraph 12 regarding the 1946-1950 History. This will not be made available. Specific questions may be asked of the Historical Staff and in this manner we may be able to meet their needs.

STANLEY J. OROGAN
Assistant to the Director